



Community Garden

What is a community garden?

Although no precise definition or single model of a community garden has been developed, such gardens do share many characteristics. The most important features are openness and community involvement. Future garden users engage in the process of shaping the space, often at the earliest stage of design; the members of the garden-based community set the rules of use, establish beds and paths, build houses for small and large animals, set up small architecture and garden infrastructure, such as arbors, compost bins or rainwater tanks. The participation of residents in creating a garden largely determines the spirit of these spaces. Gardeners, often relying on second-hand materials, adapting known patterns according to the needs of the local environment and their own preferences, co-create places with an informal, friendly character, in a manner that is halfway between work and play. And they are friendly not only to people. In many community gardens conditions are excellent for wildlife: singing birds, small mammals, melliferous plants and microscopic inhabitants of the soil. Community gardens are also spaces for many activities not strictly related to gardening; educational and cultural events, various workshops, picnics, gatherings, concerts and feasts can all take place in gardens made by the community, for the community.



Photo by Bujna Warszawa

Podwórka z natury (backyards by nature)

The "Podwórka z Natury" program is about inviting residents to co-decide about the look of the space around their place of residence. In the first stage of the program implementation, the residents work on the concept of landscaping the yard, and in the next stage, joint work is carried out. The program is implemented in the area covered by the Municipal Revitalization Program of Olsztyn 2020. These are highly urbanized areas, and the development of backyards by introducing greenery is a response to the problems of this type of areas and supports the implementation of municipal policies in the field of sustainable development:

- adaptation to climate change and air protection: the high proportion of green areas in the dense development of downtown Olsztyn increases the so-called small retention, limiting the phenomenon of flooding buildings during violent rainfalls, promotes the elimination of the so-called "heat islands", allows the management of rainwater in the place of its fall, contributes to the improvement of air quality,

- parking policy: landscaping makes it impossible to park "wild" in the city center, outside the Paid Parking Zone, which allows you to regulate the number of vehicles entering city centers,
- educating residents in the field of waste segregation,
- building a civil society - integrating and strengthening the activity of residents and developing a sense of influence on the place where they live.

Within the local communities participating in the program, new relations were established, and neighbourly ties became stronger. Residents, despite the termination of participation in the program, continue to co-create their space, showing activity in various ways: they apply for grants from external funds for its development. They independently take care of the existing greenery, enrich it with new plantings, elements of small architecture or objects of art. Some of the backyards were given their unique names, and residents continue to report on their activities on social media.

Links:

- <https://www.facebook.com/Nasze-Podw%C3%B3rko-2298357407120568>
- <https://www.facebook.com/ZaulekOptymistow>
- <https://www.facebook.com/ogrodrodziewiczowny>

